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Leaving the United States for the "Land of Liberty": Postbellum Confederates in Mexico

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Leaving the United States for the "Land of Liberty": Postbellum Confederates in Mexico

by

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Abstract

Leaving the United States for the "Land of Liberty": Postbellum Confederates in Mexico

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At the end of the US Civil War, thousands of former Confederates refused to live in a Reconstructed South, packed up their belongings, and left the country. The vast majority of these Southerners went to Mexico, Brazil and British Honduras. This thesis focuses on a settlement of Confederate families in Tuxpan, Veracruz, Mexico. By studying one settlement in depth, I demonstrate that the migrants were not all economic refugees or war refugees who uniformly returned to the United States. Instead, it shows the complex ideologies that prompted the creation of the settlement and promoted its development. The efforts of the settlers hinged heavily on race, making the settlement an important place to examine the way that race is created and utilized internationally. Accustomed to framing themselves as white in opposition to US blacks, the Southerners in Mexico had to reconstruct their whiteness in opposition their non-white Mexican neighbors. At the same time, they shaped an exoticized form of whiteness for their

"Spanish" Mexican neighbors in order to prove to their friends and family in the United States that Mexico was a sufficiently civilized place.

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Introduction

In the late spring of 1865, the Brown family of Texas packed up their belongings and headed South. While many Confederates[1] were adjusting to the fact that the South had lost the Civil War, others decided that a Yankee-controlled United States was intolerable, and left the country. John Henry Brown, a prominent Texan journalist, and his family left their central Texas home and headed to Austin, where they met up with General Jo Shelby's regiment. Civilians regularly joined the regiment as they crossed through Texas on their way south. After a tearful sinking of the Confederate flag in the Rio Grande, the caravan crossed into Mexico where they were met by the military forces of the Emperor Maximilian. They sold their weapons to the army and headed to Mexico City, where Maximilian himself welcomed the Confederate elites such as Shelby. Maximilian had placed the promotion of immigration as a cornerstone of his government's policy, and the Confederates were a convenient source of immigrants. Maximilian offered key Confederates positions in his own government to facilitate immigration and gave land grants at cheap prices for the immigrants.

John Henry Brown, however, refused the position Maximilian had offered him, as well as the cheap land, and continued traveling throughout Mexico. Two years later, with Maximilian's execution and the end of the French Intervention in Mexico, his refusal to accept Maximilian's offer became a point of pride, having assumed all along that the

[1] The term Confederate is slightly problematic for this period since the Confederacy had already fallen. Regardless, I use the term for two reasons, the first being precedent. John Henry Brown's own published writings refer to the migrants as "Confederates in Mexico," and historians ever since have tended to follow suit. Second, as I will discuss later, the Southerners in this study continued to portray themselves in clear opposition to Northerners/Yankees well after the Union was restored.

Empire would never last. Instead, Brown went to the state of Veracruz, and with surveyor John A. King, decided that the Tuxpan Valley was the ideal place for Confederate settlement. In 1868, Brown published a book *Two Years in Mexico: or, The Emigrant's Friend*, designed to help Southerners migrate to Tuxpan. Along with other Southerners, John Henry Brown bought tracts of land from a hacienda, Tumbadero, just north of the city of Tuxpan. They divided the land into plots, which they then sold to Southerners looking to leave the United States. The number of families who were living in the Tuxpan valley varied over the years that Confederates were settled there, but at its height, there may have been about one hundred families. In 1872, Gideon Lincecum reported that there were about fifty families, and while more were often coming, those going were more common. The vast majority of the families were from Texas. John Henry Brown largely centered his efforts to attract settlers in his home state, but some of his fellow colonists that he listed in *Two Years in Mexico* were from other Southern states as well.

Despite the fact that the Confederate settlement at Tuxpan lasted considerably longer than any other such colonization effort in Mexico, few historians of Confederate immigration have studied it closely. Many focus on Carlota, Veracruz, the colony funded by the Mexican Imperial government and named after the Empress Carlota. The colony did not last much longer than the Empire itself. In fact, very few Confederate settlement schemes across the Americas lasted more than a few years past the end of the US Civil War. Thousands of Southerners left the United States in the late 1860s, to settle primarily in Mexico, Brazil and British Honduras. Finding out the actual extent of these settlement schemes is difficult, and no study has effectively shown how many Southerners actually

left the United States after the war, or, for that matter, how many of them returned. As historian Donald Simmons has pointed out, the Southerners interested in promoting migration tended to highly inflate the numbers they published in newspapers, while US officials in other countries were very likely to underreport migration. Simmons suggests that the estimate of 7,000 Confederate migrants to British Honduras between 1861 and 1870 is probably excessive, but not too far off.[2] Several thousand also went to Brazil and Mexico, but estimates are uncertain for the same reasons highlighted for British Honduras.

Even more questionable than the number of Confederates that left the South is the number of Confederates that returned to the United States, dissatisfied with their new lives. Certainly, an overwhelming number of Southerners returned to the United States, which has largely led historians to frame Southern immigration as an exercise in failure. William F. Winter's foreword to Donald Simmons's otherwise fairly sound book quite neatly contains, in three short pages, the highlights of the frequently repeated "melancholy story," of the "disillusioning journey" of Southern migrants into Latin America. "By 1870," writes Winter, "it had become obvious that, onerous though it might be to accept, life in the postwar South was preferable to the inhospitable tropic wilderness of British Honduras…Those few who did remain were for the most part scattered, isolated from each other, and more than ever truly displaced persons living in

[2] Donald Simmons, *Confederate Settlements in British Honduras* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001), 17.

permanent self-imposed exile from their homeland." He goes on to say, "the subject matter of this book cannot be considered as central to the story of that turbulent time."[3]

Histories of the Confederate exodus are marked by the assumption that US citizens, as the Confederates were inherently assumed to be, belong in the United States. When originally contemplating the possibilities of connections between British Honduras and the United States, Simmons writes, "Not understanding why any American would willingly choose to leave the United States, I let the notion pass."[4] According to Andrew Rolle, himself a historian of Confederate settlements in Mexico, "Although we are a people whose emigration to distant lands is almost nonexistent, during one moment of our history many believed that their only salvation lay in flight from the United States."[5] In these narratives, not only do US Americans belong in the United States, but those that leave inevitably find themselves desiring to come back. According to William Curtis Nunn, Southerner Gideon Lincecum, who settled in the Tuxpan colony, "was not unlike the other Southerners who came to Mexico to settle. His zest for colonial endeavor did not prove great enough to keep him there. He returned to Texas and died at his home near Longpoint in 1874."[6] Yet, Lincecum was only "home" in Texas for what was intended to be a brief visit with family, before he returned home to Mexico; it was only his extended illness and death that made the stay permanent, all the while lamenting that he was not back "home" in Mexico.

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[3] Simmons, *Confederates Settlements*, 2-3.
[4] Simmons, *Confederate Settlements,* 5.
[5] Andrew F. Rolle, *The Lost Cause: The Confederate Exodus to Mexico*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965, ix.
[6] W.C. Nunn, *Escape from Reconstruction*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1956, 76.

While some authors, such as Robert E. May emphasize how the Confederate settlements were "pitiful and short lived,"[7] others note how the utter devastation of the South by the Civil War prompted the migration from the South. For example, Lawrence F. Hill spends much of the first chapter of *The Confederate Exodus to Latin America* discussing the destruction in the US South.[8] While the war certainly devastated much of the South, and the organized, structured settlements tended to not last more than a few years, both points tend to be problematic. First, it is important not to fall into the trap of seeing the Confederate migrants just as war or economic refugees. Of all the reasons that Confederates left the United States, the letters from Tuxpan give an overwhelming sense of opposition to free blacks and "Yankee rule," much more strongly than economic hardships. The migration was intensely ideological.

Along the same line, focusing on the failures of the settlements often ignores their ideological foundations. In particular, the migrants' ideas and portrayals of race—of themselves, of non-whites in the United States, and of Mexicans—were central to the settlement project. The migrants were often invested in disrupting the way that many Texans perceived Mexicans as part of their goals to expand the settlement and attract more Southerners to Mexico. Thus, this thesis examines the ways that the Confederate immigrants who settled in Tuxpan racialized themselves and their Mexican neighbors. I argue that their financial and social investment in the settlement project strongly shaped the racialization process. The Southern immigrants saw significant possibilities in a

[7] Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854-1861,* 258.
[8] Lawrence F. Hill, *The Confederate Exodus to Latin America* (Austin, 1936).

foreign country and legitimated their claim to it through highly racialized language. They might not have had their black slaves anymore, but they still wanted docile, cheap, readily available, non-white laborers who were stable and tied to the land. Even in the "wild woods of Mexico,"[9] they wanted refined, white neighbors with whom they could develop social networks. And, if possible, they wanted more white, Southern, US Americans to come enjoy it with them.

REGIONALIZATION OF RACIALIZATION

For several decades leading up to the Civil War, US Americans' racial perceptions of Latin American tended to be divided along regional lines due, in part, to the different international goals of the US North and South. Sociologist Ginetta E.B. Candelario has highlighted how the way US Americans perceived the racial identity of Dominicans in the 1840s strongly shaped the debate over the potential annexation of the Dominican Republic. According to Candelario, the question of whether or not Dominicans were "white enough" to be US citizens was central to the debate. Southern expansionists who wanted to protect the institution of slavery in the Caribbean basin were often the ones who promoted the idea that "real" Dominicans were white. Supporters of annexation, such as Jane McManus Storm Cazneau, argued that "real" Dominicans—the light skinned elites—were white enough to be citizens while the addition of another slave

[9] Mollie Alexander to Mollie Williams, June 5, 1871, 2.325/F100 Annie Williams Border Collection, 1849-1893. Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin. [Hereafter cited as "Williams Border Papers."]

state would secure the institution.[10] Furthermore, Candelario argues that Northern abolitionists, who generally opposed annexation, saw the efforts to annex the Dominican Republic as an expansionist policy of Southern slaveholders and did not consider Dominicans as appropriate potential citizens.[11] Both those opposed to and those in favor of annexation of the Dominican Republic, regardless of their reasons, saw the debates as highly racialized. While the North/South divide on racial perceptions of Latin Americans was not universal, it played an important role in the ideology behind Southern expansionism.

Southern elites were a key driving force behind US expansionism in the antebellum period in an effort to strengthen the institution of slavery by adding slave states to the Union. According to Robert E. May, many Northerners saw efforts such as filibustering as an effort of Southern slaveholding elites to create a Southern Empire.[12] Filibustering, or private military efforts to take over other countries from the United States, became increasingly regionalized as the nineteenth century progressed. According to May, "The transformation of filibustering from a national phenomenon to a primarily southern crusade" began around the 1850s during efforts to annex Cuba.[13] While the expedition leaders publicly appealed to the entire country for aid and funding, they privately appealed to Southern slave-owners' fear of the end of slavery in Cuba.

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[10] Ginetta E.B. Candelario, *Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 50.
[11] Candelario, *Black Behind the Ears,* 50.
[12] Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 272.
[13] May, *Manifest Destiny*, 252.

This Southern brand of imperial expansionism is highly evident in The Knights of the Golden Circle (KGC), an antebellum filibustering secret society, constituted predominantly of Texans and adamantly pro-South. Their primary objective was to gain territory from Mexico and annex it as a Southern state. From this, they could build a slaveholding republican empire in the Caribbean basin, "Southernizing" the region as they went.[14] Like the KGC, filibusters often hoped to add territory that would become a slave state in order to increase the strength of the Southern block in Congress, and accordingly being able to better protect the institution of slavery.

Efforts to expand US territory into Mexico and other areas required at least a minimal belief that the occupants of newly acquired territories had the potential to become good US citizens—often a contentious perspective. Many US Americans were inclined to agree with former Union General William Tecumseh Sherman when he wrote

> All I can say is that Mexico does not belong to our system…[It is] not suited to our people or pursuits. Its inhabitants are a mixture of Indians, negroes, and Spanish, that can never be tortured into good citizens, and would have to be exterminated before the country could be made available to us.[15]

Thus, where many Southerners often saw possibilities of incorporating new territory, using the inhabitants as agricultural laborers, and to set up a plantation system—Sherman, and many Northerners like him, saw people incapable of being good citizens and a land that could not be worked by "our people," most likely carrying a racial indication of "white."

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[14] Roy Sylvan Dunn, "The KGC in Texas 1860-1861," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 70.4 (1967), 545.

[15] William Tecumseh Sherman to John Sherman, November 7, 1866, in *The Sherman Letters: Correspondence between General and Senator Sherman from 1837 to 1891*, ed. Rachel Sherman Thorndike (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1894), 285-6.

While Southern expansionism largely ended with the collapse of the Confederacy, the racial identity of Mexicans continued to be of enormous importance to those Confederates who moved to Mexico. As many Southerners left the United States, they sought to portray their new homes and neighbors as white enough and good enough to attract more Southerners away from the United States. Both elite and non-elite Southerners who left the United States after the war frequently continued to use highly racialized language to situate themselves abroad and to convince their fellow Southerners to join them. Confederate John Henry Brown, for example, wrote a series of articles about the experiences of the Confederates in Mexico, in which he harshly criticized those who, "gangrened by the prejudice of race or caste," refused to recognize the positive qualities of the population of Yucatán. He added that even though the Peninsula was not as wealthy as it had been in the "ancient glory" of "slave times," "everywhere a healthy reaction is visible, and from the chaos caused by such an upheaval of old methods, is being evolved a better and more hopeful condition."[16] Brown clearly considered "prejudice of race" to be central to the misconceptions about Mexicans. Since his articles often involved convincing US Americans to invest in Mexico, it also seems that Brown understood racial perceptions to be a critical barrier to investment.

Importantly, John Henry Brown did not extend his progressive thoughts on race to blacks in the United States. In 1861, as Texas prepared to secede from the Union, Brown had chaired the committee designated to draft "A Declaration of Causes which Impel the

[16] John Henry Brown, "Confederates in Mexico," 9 of 22, *The Dallas Weekly Herald*, April 25, 1879. This was published in 22 weekly installments in the *Herald*, running for several months in 1879.

State of Texas to Secede from the Federal Union." The committee's document declared that the United States was "established exclusively by the white race, for themselves and their posterity; that the African race had no agency in their establishment; that they were rightfully held and regarded as an inferior and dependent race."[17] In another 1879 newspaper article, Brown wrote of Charley, "an orphan darkey…young, lazy and as black as cannel coal…a great sleeper, but, like some quadrupeds, was always awake for breakfast, dinner and supper," followed by a quick jab at Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison's ideas of racial equality.[18] How did he go from being a clearly racist white supremacist to chiding anti-Mexican racists in the newspaper? On the one hand, Brown was clearly invested in the US racial structure that kept blacks "inferior and dependant." At the same time, he recognized that promoting US investment in and migration to Mexico required a positive perspective of Mexicans that hinged on racial perception.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The Confederate settlement at Tuxpan is an important addition to the literature on both Confederate migration and the processes of racialization in a transnational context. Studying the settlement in depth pushes past the overwhelming sense of failure that marks the scholarship of Confederate immigration to show that the migrants were not all economic refugees or war refugees who uniformly returned to the United States. Instead, it shows the complex ideologies that prompted the creation of the settlement and

[17] John Henry Brown, *A History of Texas, from 1685 to 1892*, 393-5.
[18] John Henry Brown, "Confederates in Mexico," 3 of 22, *The Dallas Weekly Herald,* March 14, 1879.

promoted its development. Even though large numbers of Confederate immigrants ended up returning to the United States despite their anti-US rhetoric, a few in Tuxpan created and maintained institutions that supported self-identified Confederates over several generations. This is the topic of Chapter 1, which discusses the workings of the Tuxpan colony and its ideological foundations.

The Confederates who settled in Tuxpan also serve to examine the way that race is created and utilized internationally. Accustomed to framing themselves as white in opposition to US blacks, the Southerners in Mexico had to reconstruct their whiteness in opposition their non-white Mexican neighbors. At the same time, they shaped an exoticized form of whiteness for their "Spanish" neighbors in order to prove to their friends and family in the United States that Mexico was a sufficiently civilized place. Chapter 2 discusses how Confederates described Mexicans and Mexico in their letters to the United States. They contrasted the "docile," non-white working class Mexicans against the "lazy" now-free blacks in the United States, while simultaneously arguing that there was a sophisticated "white" class of "Spanish" Mexicans.

The conclusion returns to the often-repeated trope of failure in the scholarship on Confederate immigration. Some scholars have looked to Brazil, where Confederate identification lasted much longer than anywhere else outside of the United States. Even today, some Brazilians celebrate their Confederate heritage, and scholars have set this as a standard for the success or failure of Confederate colonies. However, the Tuxpan colony was a very different situation from the Brazilian. I look at a few of the Confederate families who remained in Tuxpan past the 1870s and gave birth to a second

generation. Unlike Confederates in Brazil, many of the Tuxpan Confederates were able to maintain a transnational identity across generations due to the fluidity of the U.S.-Mexico border as well as an increased number of US Americans in Mexico during the end of the 19th century.

This thesis draws largely on archival collections of journals and letters that the Confederate settlers sent back to the United States. Most of the collections are in the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, since the majority of the settlers came from Texas. Others had family members in other parts of the United States, and both the Southern Collection at the University of North Carolina and the College of William and Mary have important collections of letters from Tuxpan. The fact that these families were writing and mailing letters to the United States makes the evidence skewed towards families with some financial stability, since both paper and postage tended to be expensive. However, none of them were quite wealthy elites. Many of them had slaves in the United States, some of them hired laborers in Mexico, but all of them had to work to keep food on the table.

Gideon Lincecum, a prominent "frontier naturalist," and medical doctor from Texas was among the most prolific writers in the Tuxpan colony. He moved to Tuxpan with his daughter, widowed in the war, and her seven young children. Most of Lincecum's writings about Tuxpan are in the form of letters to his daughter, Sarah Doran. The Browns were another family with extensive writings about Tuxpan, since John Henry Brown was highly invested—financially and socially—in convincing other

Southerners to move to the settlement. His wife, Marion, and his oldest daughter, Clara, also wrote to family in Texas describing their thoughts about Mexico.

The Alexander family included three teenaged daughters—Laura, Mollie and Roxie—who kept in contact with their friends in Texas, Annie and Mollie Williams. The letters shed significant light on the social life of the migrants and their interactions with their Mexican neighbors. Theodocius Scurlock and Frederick Lutterloh were both single doctors whose primary contact with the United States was through their respective brothers. Scurlock also kept a diary for the first two years that he was in Mexico that gives important insights into the economic efforts of the settlers.

Several newspapers from both the United States and Mexico have also contributed to this research. Many of the Confederates, in their eagerness to attract more settlers to join their colonies, published lengthy letters in newspapers back in the United States. There was also a newspaper run by a former Confederate in Mexico City, *The Two Republics*, designed to facilitate immigration between the United States and Mexico. Furthermore, many newspapers in the Mexico City press eagerly gave their own opinions about immigration to Mexico in general, and the Confederate colonies in particular. These newspapers give an important insight into the environment in which Confederate migration took place.

Chapter 1: Building a Confederate Community in Tuxpan

When Gideon Lincecum finally felt that he had mastered Spanish enough for conversations beyond the basics, he tried to discern the feeling of his new neighbors about Confederate immigration. He wrote to Sarah "I spent 2 hours in town in conversation with such of the leading Mexicans as I could find on the subject of holding out inducements for American imigration [sic]," and was very pleased with the results. Enough so, that he promised to write letters to US newspapers informing them of how eager Mexicans are for US immigration. A few days later he added that he had spent another day doing the same, and told Sarah that he "found the general desire, frankly expressed, very much in favor of having the unoccupied lands filled up with industrious foreigners and they say they want them to come by the thousand."[19] In Lincecum's view, these dynamics of immigration seem rather simple: he and the other Americans in the colony eagerly desired other US Americans to join them, and believed that Mexicans were equally eager for their arrival. Despite Lincecum's insistent belief that Confederate migration was a welcome prospect for Mexicans, not all Mexicans viewed it that way.

The Confederates' search for new land came at a time when Mexico—along with many nations of the Americas—was seeking to encourage immigration. Immigration was a foundational aspect of government policy, and Mexico looked towards other nations' successful efforts to attract thousands of foreigners—largely European—to their shores with plans of their own. The colonization of "vacant lands" became a cornerstone policy

[19] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Doran, October 30, 1870, Gideon Lincecum Collection, 1821-1933, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin [hereafter cited as Lincecum Collection].

of the Mexican government, such that Benito Juarez and Maximilian each issued competing enticements for potential colonists during the French Intervention despite being in the middle of a war. In 1871, a journalist described immigration as "the constant dream of our government."[20] The Confederates also considered themselves ideal immigrants for Mexico, not just Lincecum. Other Confederates also mentioned the delight with which their new neighbors welcomed them to Mexico. The Alexander sisters went so far as to point out that their whiteness was a critical factor of their desirability.

The Mexican state seems to have pursued differing goals in its immigration policy. Historian Jose Hernández has argued that historians' tendency to see Mexican immigration policy as a failure is based on faulty assumptions about the ultimate goals of immigration. While many historians have argued that Mexican policy makers designed immigration laws to "whiten" and "improve" the Mexican race—as was the case in many other Latin American nations in the 19th century—Hernández argues that the primary goal was to promote the integration of indigenous populations into the Mexican state. Mexican policy makers in support of immigration argued that Indians and immigrants would integrate with each other, while simultaneously becoming Mexican and helping Mexico become a modern nation. Rather than trying to make Mexico more European, immigration was designed to Mexicanize both immigrants and Indians.[21] It is important to point out, however, that not all immigrants were created equal when it came to the debates. Hernandez convincingly argues that there was much more to immigration than

[20] "Colonización," *El Monitor Republicano*, June 9, 1871.

[21] José Hernández, "From Conquest to Colonization: Indios and Colonization Policies after Mexican Independence," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 26.2 (2010): 291-322.

whitening, but there was certainly a racial component to it, particularly in the way that labor was racialized as non-white.[22]

While European immigration gained wide support in the Mexican press, many people were deeply concerned with the issue of immigration from the United States. Many in particular had a specific concern for Southern immigration, despite the easily accessible nature of the potential immigration. The United States was much more conveniently located, though many perceived US immigration as rife with many more dangers. The memory of losing Texas to rowdy Anglo-American settlers was still sharp in the minds of Mexicans even some forty years later. According to a writer in *El Ferro-carril*, the United States' recent purchase of Alaska would not keep the country's appetite for land sated for long. He urged Mexico to populate its northern frontier as quickly as possible, before the United States turned its appetite towards Mexican territory once more. In fact, one of the most commonly articulated arguments in favor of immigration was that populating Mexico's northern territory would serve as protection in the event of an invasion from their "colossal neighbor to the North." [23] Populating the frontier with US Americans who would maintain their loyalties to the United States would directly counter this goal. The United States, then, simultaneously provided an example of successful immigration to imitate, a fear-driven impetus to populate empty territories, and a potential source of immigration.

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[22] See, for example, Francisco Zarco's proposal for immigration in *El Siglo XIX,* March 4, 1869.

[23] "Colonización e Inmigración," *El Ferro-Carril*, December 4, 1867.

The debates about the potential for US immigration were particularly heated when it came to Southerners. According to Alfred J. Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hanna, "Confederate immigrants as a group probably aroused more apprehension in Mexicans than any other people."[24] On the one hand, some argued that Confederates were a defeated people, no longer loyal to the United States, and would therefore side with Mexico in the event of a war. Others argued that the North/South animosity would not last long after the Civil War, and recognized that much of the US's appetite for land was driven by Southern elites.[25] *El Monitor Republicano*, a Mexico City newspaper, reprinted an article from *El Comercio* in Matamoros, which reported with great alarm the impending Texan settlement in Tuxpan. While *El Comercio* said they were in support of the colonization of families from just about anywhere, even the United States, they were firmly opposed to Texans.[26] They wanted immigrants who, "because of their education, see us as brothers, and do not bring the seed of loathing for us in their hearts." "But instead," they lamented, "we receive *señores tejanos*, who have eternally fought us, who have eternally detested us… who, instead of marching to the interior of the Republic [as a conquering force], situate themselves in one of our ports, in order to make us part of Texas." Moreover, they add, "we already know that our neighbors ignore our language and easily confuse the term *immigration* for *intervention*." The editors of *El Monitor Republicano* agreed, arguing against immigration for its own sake and that Texan

[24] Alfred J. Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hanna, "The Immigration Movement of the Intervention and Empire as Seen through the Mexican Press," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 27.2 (1947): 232.
[25] Ibid., 233.
[26] "Inmigracion," Editorial, *El Monitor Republicano*, December 14, 1867.

immigration would do nothing to enrich Mexico. This article succinctly shows many of the Mexican concerns and desires around immigration in general and US immigration in particular. In part, they were concerned about a potential intervention from the US government, either to defend the rights of the immigrants or to annex the territory. More than that, they wanted immigrants who would be "brothers," and bristled at the idea of immigrants who would "ignore our language."

This concern about immigrants from the United States refusing to learn Spanish was also evident in a brief comment from *El Siglo XIX* about their expectation of the impending failure of the Confederate colony in Tuxpan. According to the author, the colony's poverty meant, "we will soon have a good harvest of discontentment," bitterly adding, "Fortunately, they don't speak our language."[27] While *El Siglo XIX* may have been glad that the language barrier would prevent them from hearing the former Confederates' whining, their failure to learn Spanish was certainly a point of contention. For all three papers—*El Comercio, El Monitor Republicano,* and *El Siglo XIX*—learning Spanish, and thus being able to integrate and interact with the Mexican population, was an important feature of desirable immigrants. All three assumed that Confederates would not fit the mold of ideal immigrants who would integrate into Mexican society.

When Theodocius Scurlock complained on his travels through the state of Veracruz, that most Mexicans "have no use for a foreigner," it is difficult to say what it was that shaped this experience and why it was so distinct from Lincecum's. After complaining that he and his traveling partner had made many enemies in the town in

[27] "Veracruz, Tuxpan," Corespondencia, *El Siglo XIX,* March 9, 1868.

which they had recently tried to settle, he added, "They are a jealous people and most of them unprincipled. Hope to get a call [for work as a doctor] soon what will pay me. Truly dull times but I am not dispirited."[28] Scurlock did seem to have a lot going against him. He was a Southerner through and through, and certainly carried his bitterness with him to Mexico. At the time that he wrote this particular journal entry, he spoke no Spanish, which was evidently an important aspect of a good immigrant. Furthermore, while the Mexico City elite, and even the "educated men" of Tuxpan may have been in support of immigration does not mean that the general population was. For example, Historian Dieter Berninger has argued that much of Mexico was marked by xenophobia as the elites promoted immigration.[29] Thus it is impossible to tell if the reaction Scurlock met with was due to a personal distaste of his pomposity—and Scurlock was capable of nothing if not pomposity—or if it was a broader issue of opposition to foreigners in general.

THE TUXPAN SETTLEMENT

In February of 1866, Indians reportedly raided and destroyed the "American colony at Tuxpan" that had been founded by General Jo Shelby in late 1865. Historian Andrew F. Rolle describes how the "fierce Toluca Indians" wanted their land returned to them, raided the settlement, "put the colonists to the torch and threw their corpses into the ocean." Rolle reports in a likely dramatized version of events that Shelby, after having

[28] Scurlock Diary, January 3, 1869, Theodocius Joshua Scurlock Papers, Manuscripts and Rare Books Department, Swem Library, College of William and Mary [hereafter cited as Scurlock Collection].
[29] George Dieter Berninger, *Mexican Attitudes towards Immigration, 1821-1857,* (Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972).

fought tooth and nail against the "hostile natives," gave up on Tuxpan and returned to Córdoba all the while staying true to those Confederates that he had convinced to move to Mexico.[30] Curiously, several months after the reported destruction of Tuxpan, on December 16, 1866, Shelby published an article in the *Memphis Daily Avalanche*, trying to convince people to move to the peaceful, well-managed and fruitful American colony at Tuxpan. According to Shelby, it enjoyed easy access to Cuba, where one could access Coolie labor to work the fertile country. He assured his "friends in the United States," that he could ensure "a brave, prosperous, extensive colony," impervious to destruction.[31]

The height of the Tuxpan settlement of Confederates actually came rather later than Shelby's tentative efforts in 1866. While Shelby did not stay in Mexico past this, his efforts in Tuxpan were not the last. John Henry Brown moved to Tuxpan from Orizaba in late 1866 and decided that it was ideal for Confederate immigration. Former Confederate governor of Missouri Thomas C. Reynolds, who also went to Mexico after the war, thoroughly agreed. He wrote to Brown that the Tuxpan region "is the best base for American migration, spreading inwards and up and down the temperate region."[32] Other Texans, such as Mordelo Munson and Ferrel Vincent also began purchasing large tracts of land in order to sell to potential settlers in 1867, and in the next few years, over a hundred Southern families arrived in Tuxpan. Most of them were Texan, as the founders

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[30] Andrew F. Rolle, *The Lost Cause: The Confederate Exodus to Mexico* (Norma: University of Oklahoma, 1965), 112. Rolle cites Confederate John Edwards' "unreliable" book as evidence for this scene.

31 *Memphis Daily Avalanche*

[32] T.C. Reynolds to John Henry Brown, July 24, 1867, John Henry Brown Family Papers, 1691-1951, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin [hereafter cited as JHB Papers].

of the colony focused on their home state in their efforts to increase immigration, relying, it seems, on personal connections. Gideon Lincecum heard of the Confederate settlement through his son-in-law W.P. Doran, who knew and communicated with John Henry Brown.[33]

In November of 1867, Theodocius Joshua Scurlock and a traveling party of several other Texan men left Texas for Tuxpan. They spent two months on the road, traveling to Tuxpan by horse, despite the fact that most settlers went by boat through Galveston. With evident relief at finding a real bed for the first time in months, Scurlock stayed at the inn in the city run by a widow of a Confederate soldier in Tuxpan. A doctor by trade, Scurlock went along with his traveling companions only out of curiosity as they went to look at land. The majority of settlers in Tuxpan went with the intent of getting into agriculture, even those who had made their money in other occupations in the United States. As his traveling companions began to pick lands they wanted to purchase, Scurlock began to pack up, ready to continue on his endless quest for paying patients. Scurlock struggled to make ends meet during his first few years in Mexico, as did many doctors who had come from the United States.[34] He repeatedly wrote in his journal that he was considering heading back to Texas. He had had a steady job there, working at and insane asylum near Austin and while it did not pay as well as he would have liked, he had been better off than in Mexico.

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[33] Gideon Lincecum to John Henry Brown, September 12, 1867, JHB Papers.

[34] Confederate Dr. David McKnight settled with his family in Matamoros, Mexico after the war. While his family remained in Matamoros, McKnight traveled extensively across Mexico in search of patients, as Scurlock did. David McKnight, III, Family Papers, 1857-1935, 1976-1978-1992-1995, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

Why, then, had he gone? Scurlock's poem in honor of his exile from home sums up his sentiments:

> Farewell Sweet home
> I may never see you again,
> A Rover in a Strange land,
> Far away from friends and home,
> Exiled by my own will,
> Not liking Vandals and Negroes rule,
> But hope erelong to return to thee again.
> When ere you cry throw off the yoke
> Your Sons will once more return
> And strike once more for thee
> And avenge thy stripes and bruises[35]

Here, the home of which Scurlock waxes so poetic is specifically the South, rather than the United States in general. When he refers to "your sons," he saw himself as part of a dispersal of Southerners, who waited only for the end of "Vandal" (Northern Yankee) control of the South. The description of it as the "Vandal government" may have been a reference to the 5th century invasion of Rome by the Vandals—a "civilized" society being sacked by "barbarians"--or simply an implication that the US government had vandalized them. Either way, Scurlock was certainly not alone in either his heartfelt poetry about the broken South,[36] or in his firm vision of himself as, primarily, a Southerner. In his letters to his brother Dan, he spares no amount of vitriol for the "Vandal government," of the "US So called," at least until 1871 when he became suspicious that "some kind Yankee" was monitoring his mail. "I will now write U.S. in future instead of U.S. So called," he

[35] Scurlock Diary, October 18, 1868, Scurlock Papers. It is unknown if Scurlock composed this poem or simply copied it into his journal, and he never made any other efforts at poetry in his journal.

[36] See for example Colonel Alonzo Slayback's poem "The Burial of Shelby's Flag." The poem memorialized the ceremonious sinking of the Confederate flag in the Rio Grande as General Shelby's troop crossed into Mexico.

told Dan, adding "I now expect every letter I receive from you in future will be opened, consequently be particular how you write, The Vandals may have detectives."[37]

Like many of the settlers at Tuxpan, Scurlock was not part of the initial flood of Confederates across the Mexican border that had refused to surrender to the Union. He had lived in a broken South for several years before he left. He also had not left for financial reasons, as some scholars have suggested about Confederates leaving the United States. Rather, his disgust with the "Vandals and negroes rule" was the decisive factor. For many Confederates, their self-identification as white Southerners, oppressed and overrun by blacks and white Northerners was what pushed them to leave the United States.

For many of the Confederates, rejecting Yankees and blacks while embracing Southern identity did not necessarily mean rejecting the United States. In fact, Drew Gilpin Faust argues that many Southerners considered themselves the true heirs to the US Revolutionary spirit.[38] The Alexander sisters, for example, clearly identified as "American," and referred to the Confederate settlement as the "American colony." At the same time, Laura Alexander Vincent (she married fellow Confederate exile Ferrel Vincent shortly after arriving) was still clearly mortified over "the idea of the Yankee rule."[39] She viewed herself in opposition to Northerners, rather than the United States itself. Years later, Laura Alexander Vincent's granddaughter, Georgie Burden, who was

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[37] Theodocius Scurlock to Dan Scurlock, January 18, 1871, Scurlock Papers.
[38] Drew Gilpin Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Louisiana State University Press, 1990).
[39] Laura Vincent to Mollie Williams, March 15, 1871, Williams Border Papers.

born in Tuxpan, recognized the settlement as being a specifically Confederate one, as well as a generally "American," one.[40] Many of the settlers viewed "Confederate" and "American" as compatible terms, though they clearly saw the former in opposition to "Yankee" and "Northerner." Gideon Lincecum was perhaps more adamant in his rejection of the United States than many of the other settlers, but his letters seem to suggest that he was not alone. In regards to Independence Day in the United States he wrote, "But what care I for the fourth of July, when my very soul is disgusted with the whole nation that used to do worship on that day?"[41] He goes on to mention that no one else in the settlement, including some neighbors that had visited him earlier in the day, seemed to notice the passing of July 4.

Not only did the settlers portray themselves as oppressed by Yankees in the South, they also represented themselves as being overrun by the newly freed blacks in the United States. John Henry Brown's role as chairman of the committee that wrote the aforementioned "Declaration of Causes which Impel the State of Texas to Secede from the Federal Union" is very telling. The document stated that the United States was "established exclusively by the white race, for themselves and their posterity; that the African race had no agency in their establishment; that they were rightfully held and

[40] Georgie Burden, *Mexico: a Confederate Haven*, (Boulder, CO: John E. Burden, 2004).
[41] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, June 22, 1869, Lincecum Collection. This letter, as many of Gideon's letters to Sarah, is written in diary-form. The first date of the letter is June 22, but extends through July, when the schooner finally left for Galveston. All letters similarly written are cited by the first date given.

regarded as an inferior and dependent race."[42] Brown clearly viewed his and his compatriots' whiteness as central to their role within the nation.

Gideon Lincecum was equally emphatic that the newly freed Blacks had no place in the United States. When his daughter Sarah asked him in a letter why it bothered him that blacks were to be educated in the United States, he responded, "I have no objection to their being educated, but I do object to being taxed to pay for it. I object to living under the influence of Yankee rule, supported by negro suffrage [and] the negro militia."[43] He believed that the financial struggles of so many whites in the postbellum South (including some of his family members) were due to "the influence of negro suffrage and oppressive taxation."[44] Laura Alexander declared that she "would not go back there [the United States] now to live for any thing you could offer," bristling at "the idea of the Yankee rule & free negro impudence."[45] For the Confederate settlers, their disgust at Yankees and "free negroism" went hand in hand, making up an important part of their identification as white Southerners, and impelling them to leave the South. The Confederates' self-identification as white Southerners in an oppressed and fallen South was largely what pushed them to Mexico and kept some of them there during hard times.

DEVELOPING A CONFEDERATE COMMUNITY IN TUXPAN

Since the Confederates' self-identification as a community of white Southerners was so critical to the creation of the Tuxpan colony, it is understandable that they would

[42] Brown, *History of Texas*, 393-5.
[43] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Doran, August 26, 1870, Lincecum Collection.
[44] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Doran, October 12, 1870, Lincecum Collection.
[45] Laura Alexander Vincent to Mary Williams, March 5, 1871, Williams Border Papers.

largely try to recreate—or create an imagined version of—this community. Mollie Alexander wrote, "If only we had a few more good american [sic] citizens and church to go to once in a while we would be perfectly satisfied."[46] These sentiments are common: that the colony's largest lack was more Southerners and more Southern institutions. The settlers in Tuxpan were far more moderate in their desire for an exclusively Southern community than earlier immigrants. The colonists in Carlota, near Orizaba, Veracruz, reportedly refused to socialize with any Spanish-speaking Mexicans, provoking outrage in the Mexico City press. The Tuxpan settlers, however, seem to have realized that Spanish was unavoidable, and with the exception of Theodocius Scurlock, picked it up within the first few years of arriving. According to Lincecum, the arrival of Southerners in Tuxpan set of a flurry of effort among the locals to learn English, but it did not last long, "hence all intercommunication is had in the Spanish language."[47] As I will discuss in Chapter 2, many of them also socialized with the local elite "Spanish" population, primarily in Spanish.

Despite their efforts to fit in with the local population, the Confederates also showed a clear desire for more US and Southern institutions. All three of the Alexander sisters mentioned how much they missed their religious life back in the States. In 1869, some of the settlers tried to organize a Baptist Church in Tuxpan. When Mollie wrote that she and the family had "been to Baptist preaching 3 times since we arrived here," it was

[46] Mollie Alexander to Molllie Williams, October 9, 1870, Williams Border Papers.
[47] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Doran, October 12, 1870, Williams Border Papers.

likely in reference to Texan Newell Crane's preaching.[48] Gideon Lincecum mentioned Crane's efforts at creating a Church community with regular prayer meetings, but Lincecum, who hated organized religion, was disgusted with the effort. He complained about how "the big old Crane whooped and squaked [sic] and prayed" and described preachers as a genus "which should be denominated *mucho mala humbre* [sic, *bad men*]."[49] Newell Crane's efforts did not last long, as he returned to Texas later that year and in 1871, Roxie reported to Mollie that there were no preachers in the area "at present, but all religion is tolerated under this Government. The Catholic religion prevails among these people you know and there is a Catholic church and Priest established in town. I like very much to attend church and miss it very much."[50]

It seems as though the Alexanders never got their wish. In 1876, US Pastor J.B. Willis visited Mexico for several months as part of a missionary effort to bring Protestantism to the country. He noted Protestant churches that he passed throughout, but his stay in Tuxpan elicited nothing but yet another mention of his opinion on the failures of the Catholic Church.[51] The fact that the settlers were unable to create a protestant Church, yet unwilling to attend a Catholic Church is indicative of the position they held in Mexico. On the one hand, the fact that Roxie missed Church but would not attend a Catholic mass suggests that she resisted full integration into the Mexican community of Tuxpan. On the other hand, Protestantism was an important foundation of Confederate

[48] Roxie Alexander to Mollie and Annie Williams, August 15, 1869, Williams Border Papers.
[49] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Doran, June 22, 1869, Lincecum Collection.
[50] Mollie Alexander to Mollie Williams, June 5, 1871, Lincecum Collection.
[51] J.B. Willis Papers, 1874-1877, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

nationalism.[52] The fact that the community was not able to support a Protestant Church suggests that they were less able to maintain their Confederate identity than they had intended.

Similarly, education was another social space that suggests a partial resistance to integration and a desire to maintain a Confederate-identified community with limited results. Not many of the families who settled in Tuxpan brought young children, but one of the exceptions to this was the Brown family, who were particularly concerned with educating their three young girls. Clara Brown, the oldest of the daughters, told her Aunt that she was eagerly expecting a school to be opened soon not far from their home. Clara failed to go into detail, but the fact that the expected school was to be only a mile away suggests that it was to be a school for the Confederates' children. Several months later, however, no school had appeared. "Sister Lizzie, Baby [Marion] and I learn our lesson every day," Clara told her aunt, "there is no school here so we recite our lessons to Ma."[53] English-language schooling, however, was important to the settlers and as many of the next generation of children from the Tuxpan colony began to grow up, they were educated in the United States. For example, Georgie Burden was taken to the United States for her education, as were some of the other children of her generation.[54] Even though the second and third generation of the settlers grew up speaking predominantly Spanish, it was important to many of their parents that the children get an English-language, American education.

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[52] Faust, *Confederate Nationalism*.

[53] Clara Brown to "Aunt Hannah," December 12, 1868, JHB Papers.

[54] Burden, *Confederate Haven*.

Many of the Confederates at Tuxpan also tried to start an agricultural society, as they announced in *The Two Republics*. The society was an effort to combine the importance of Southernhood and Americanness with their ability to be financially profitable. As important as the Southern institutions such as the Protestant Church were to the Confederates, what often sent people back to the United States was their lack of capital. The intention of the society was to create a seed exchange between Southerners in different parts of Mexico, which would not only create social connections, but was also intended to help create an important financial safety net which many Southerners lacked in their new country.[55]

The lack of financial safety net caused problems for many Confederates in Mexico. In March of 1875, Frederick H. Lutterloh was nearing desperation. His sugar cane crop produced far less than he had hoped, just as market prices for sugar and molasses were falling. In a letter to his brother, Washington, he catalogued all of his belongings and those of his companions as proof of their pathetic state. "Well Wash," he wrote to Washington in North Carolina, "you can't think & I can hardly realize how fallen I am. Six months ago I and all who knew my cane farm thought I was well to do. Today if my debt were paid, about 85 dollars, I would not be worth a dollar."[56] When Lutterloh had planted his first sugar cane crop, he did so with high hopes of making a profit—upwards of some 1300 dollars.

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[55] *The Two Republics,* September 15, 1868.

[56] Frederick H. Lutterloh to Washington Lutterloh, March 9, 1875, Lutterloh Family Papers, 1780-1889, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Lutterloh did not discuss the extent of his sugar efforts, but his letters give the impression that he was working off rented land. His extensive debt suggests that his start up money for growing sugar was at least partly a loan rather than capital that he brought with him from the United States. Whether or not his expectation to make 1300 dollars on his cane crop was ever realistic is hard to say, but he certainly did not seem to expect the failure to so much as break even. He had been a doctor in the United States, and the confident way that he requested Washington to send him money suggests that he was long accustomed to having more expendable income than he had in Mexico. His complaints about his threadbare clothes imply that he had been used to owning multiple, high-quality outfits. And now, down to his last set of clothes and last few coins, working on rented land, Lutterloh was clearly done with his efforts in Mexico. His companion Johny was working as a day laborer for fifty cents a day, but according to Lutterloh, "work is scarce & hard to get."[57] Both were desperate to either get money from the United States or head back to Texas themselves, preferably both.

Although Gideon Lincecum was already dead when Lutterloh headed back to Texas, Lincecum likely would have labeled Lutterloh lazy and shiftless, as he uniformly labeled all of the people who moved back to the United States. "It is the same with everyone who have gone back," Lincecum claimed. "They could not nor did not work. No industrious man has shown any indication of going back. They have plenty and are working daily enlarging their sugar farms and improving their places."[58] Lincecum was

[57] Frederick H. Lutterloh to Washington Lutterloh, March 9, 1875, Lutterloh Papers.
[58] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, September 27, 1869, Lincecum Collection.

in a very different position than Lutterloh, the former able to hire labor, while the latter was looking for work. Lincecum had certainly gone to Mexico with some amount of capital, as his family was, at the very least, financially comfortable in Texas. He had been a small-scale slave owner with a handful of slaves with whom he had a strongly paternalistic relationship. His slaves had done domestic labor as well as agricultural labor on Lincecum's small-scale agricultural homestead. After the Civil War, Lincecum's bitterness towards the end of slavery led him to refuse to hire black labor in the United States, not even his former slaves towards whom he had supposedly felt so paternalistically affectionate.[59]

Many of the Confederates were likely in a similar position to Lincecum, accustomed to a few slaves, but unable or unwilling to replace them with hired labor after emancipation. Lincecum told his daughter Sarah that the Confederate women accustomed to domestic slave labor in Tuxpan were having the hardest time adjusting to life without slaves.[60] The procurement of labor was an important goal for many Southerners who had been accustomed to slave labor before and during the Civil War. However many of the settlers' letters are either hazy on the details of the labor system in Tuxpan, or are so focused on attracting other settlers to the region to make them difficult to believe—often both. Those who published material on the merits of Tuxpan focused on the availability of steady, cheap labor. Jo Shelby pointed to the proximity of Cuba for access to coolie labor and John Henry Brown to the Mexican peasantry. Brown claimed in his book that

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[59] Jerry Bryan Lincecum and Edward Hake Phillips, *Adventures of a Frontier Naturalist: the Life and Times of Dr. Gideon Lincecum*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994, xxiv

[60] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, September 27, 1869, Lincecum Collection

> Persons with means to hire can always get labor—in limited amount near at hand—in any quantity from the Indian villages fifteen, twenty to fifty miles from us. …These people, when under a care of a manager of their people or one of our own, work well; and many are constant and faithful left to themselves.[61]

According to Lincecum, this idea turned out to be far less successful than they had hoped: "A great many people who came here with the expectation of hiring labor are greatly disappointed, and are going back every chance."[62] But even Lincecum was able to hire "indians" on the occasions that he needed timber brought in for building his sugarhouse or tar for sealing his boat.[63] Based on his letters to Sarah, Lincecum did most of the labor on his land himself, including processing the sugar that he grew. His daughter Leonora did the housework and her young children did odd jobs as they were able.

The successes of the Alexander and Vincent families suggest that there was labor available even on a large scale, provided settlers had the money for it. Unlike Lutterloh, Dr. Andrew Alexander had clearly gone to Tuxpan with at least some capital. Andrew—the father of Laura, Mollie, and Roxie Alexander—along with Ferrel Vincent—the future husband of Laura Alexander—and several others from Brazoria County, Texas, had invested in land in Tuxpan. Some of those who remained in Texas, primarily Mordelo Munson, continued to contribute money and technology to the Vincents' and Alexanders' agricultural efforts. The families' available capital seemed to have made a huge difference in their success: in early 1870 the Alexanders had recently invested in a pair of mules for their sugar mill, and by the harvest of 1871, they had already upgraded to a

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[61] John Henry Brown, *Two Years in Mexico*: or, the Emigrant's Friend, (Gavelston, TX: Printed At the "News" Book and Job Office, 1867), 86.
[62] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, August 7, 1868, Lincecum Collection.
[63] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, August 17, 1870, Lincecum Collection.

steam powered mill, sent from Galveston by Mordelo Munson. Even before they had the newly upgraded equipment, Mollie claimed that the Alexanders were making "$50 to $100 per week," on their 20 acres of cane, "and that is better than having our property stolen; or being shot by thieves," as she perceived life in Texas.[64] In 1871, Mollie complained about the "crowd of hirelants [sic]," that she had to care for "ever since we commenced making sugar."[65] By the 1873 harvest, Laura claimed that the Vincents had "over 100 hands at work during the [sugar] making season," working "on the first steam mill ever erected in the Valley of Tuspan [sic], Mexico."[66] Neither Mollie nor Laura was ever forthcoming about who the "hirelants" helping process the sugar were, and their eagerness to convince Annie and Mollie Williams that Tuxpan was the most fruitful place on earth means that their descriptions should be taken with a grain of salt. Mollie's jab at stolen property and thieves is clearly a reference to the Williams' experience, implying that they should be significantly better off in Tuxpan than Texas.

What is clear in these letters, though, is that moving to Mexico with capital opened up a wealth of possibilities that were not open to Frederick Lutterloh. While Lutterloh and Theodocius Scurlock floundered on their rented land, it would appear that the Alexanders and Vincents owned their land and the technology to process their crops, they were able to hire significant numbers of workers, and had multiple servants. In the meantime, Lutterloh's companion was working for fifty cents a day, while they tried to process the products of their rented land on someone else's mill, paying the fees with

[64] Mollie Alexander to Mollie Williams, October 9, 1870, Williams Border Papers.
[65] Mollie Alexander to Mollie Williams, March 12, 1871, Williams Border Papers.
[66] Laura Alexander Vincent to Annie Williams Border, August 25, 1873, Williams Border Papers.

borrowed money. Scurlock repeatedly expressed concern about their lack of food, while Lincecum described feasts of "fresh pork, 8 or 10 pounds of fat fish, onions, garlic, peas, beans, roasting ears, plenty of nice white oker, cayenne, Agua cata [sic, avacado], Guava, plantains, bananas—in marmalade—chiotes, nice cabbage, butterbeans, tomatoes—all this and several other nice little nic nacs, such as oranges, lemons, zapota [sic] &c. can be gathered up and served on the table any day besides our good bread."[67] Even if Lincecum was not working on the same scale that the Alexanders and Vincents may have done, it appears he had enough capital to invest in the land and technology to be successful. Many newspapers in the late 1860s and 1870s in the US South and Mexico warned people against moving to Mexico without money. *The Two Republics*, in particular, was insistent that people should not, by any means, move to Mexico without start-up capital. Such people were probably the ones that found themselves in Lutterloh's position, with little option but to return to the United States. He moved to Texas, where he again found work as a physician.

Lutterloh's position does not seem to be that unusual. According to Scurlock and Lincecum, many people sincerely struggled to make a living in Tuxpan, and many ended up going back to Texas. The Brown family, one of the key promoters of settling in the region, ended up returning to the United States in 1872 because John was offered a job. In a time when cash was extremely difficult to come by, it was too tempting an offer to pass by. While they had successfully planted a significant amount of food—"vanilla, coffee, oranges, bananas, mangoes, and we have one coconut sprouted"—they struggled

[67] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, August 17, 1870, Lincecum Collection.

to expand into a sugar plantation, as they wanted. According to Mary, they were entirely "without capital, so of course our progress is gradual. None of the proprietors of the Tumbadero estate have any capital, so they have to depend of the sale of lands to make their annual payment of $1000.00 a year."[68] Even though many of the settlers hoped to make their money on sugar as a cashcrop, monoculture was not an option, and they needed to grow food to feed themselves. But they simultaneously struggled to pay the bills involved in expanding their investments.

Despite the Brown's return to the United States for lack of capital, they never went hungry. Lutterloh's account is the only set of letters that I have found in which people have written home describing their misery, which makes it worth pointing out a few things. First of all, paper was expensive. The archivist that transcribed Scurlock's diary suggested that the reason he stopped was that paper probably grew too expensive for him. Lincecum, on the other hand, did quite well for himself and wrote many lengthy letters to his daughter. Thus, the experiences examined here are certainly skewed towards the fairly successful, even if they were not all wealthy elites. Lutterloh's letters to his brother focused largely on requests for money and descriptions of his hardships and little else. At this point in my research, it is difficult to say to what extent economic status played a role in the Southerner's descriptions and perspectives of Mexico.

Second, Lutterloh's experience in Mexico and his letters seem to suggest that his experience was not very different from many Southerners who stayed in the United States. Times were financially difficult for many Southerners across class and ethnic

[68] Mary Brown to Unknown, n.d., JHB Papers.

lines. A friend of Clara Brown's wrote to her from Texas, "I fear the grasshoppers will destroy all the gardens & everything else, if they do, I do not know what will be the state of the country another year. Times are depressed enough as it is, nothing but 'hard times' greets the ear on every side." [69] What made the US more financially feasible was not the ability to grow crops better, but rather the ability to rely on their social networks during hard times. When Dan Scurlock tried to convince his brother Theodocius to return to the United States, he did so because he was afraid of his brother being old and sick far away in a foreign country without his family to rely on. The same is true when Gideon Lincecum's daughters wrote to each other—Sarah Doran wrote to her sister Leonora Campbell, asking her to come home to her family where she would be supported. Gideon scoffed at the idea and told Sarah that Leonora's real family was in Mexico. Money was certainly tight for many migrants in Mexico, but then, money was tight for many people in the Southern United States as well. If Lutterloh's case is any indication, one of the main reasons that people returned to the United States was because their lack of family and community ties in Mexico meant having nothing to fall back on when times were hard.

Finally, many of those who left the United States after the war were, at the very least, financially comfortable. Lutterloh, for example, made a tolerable living as a doctor in Texas, and continued to do so on his return. Thus his complaints of absolute destitution are probably relative. When the Confederates left the United States to find "freedom," they had probably not imagined being reduced to tenant farmers on par with laboring

[69] Laura McAlister to Clara Brown, March 19, 1868, JHB Papers.

Mexicans. Despite their rhetoric against the United States, some probably found being oppressed by Yankees on their own land preferable to laboring on someone else's land.

Chapter 2: Racializing Southerners, Racializing Mexicans

Shortly after the Alexander family arrived in Tuxpan, Roxie wrote to her friend Mollie Williams back in the United States about her first experiences with Mexicans. "You would laugh," she told Mollie, "to see the natives." They "come in crowds to look at the white ladies."[70] This is telling for multiple reasons. For one, Roxie's statement clearly articulates the importance with which she viewed herself as a white woman. Note that, at the time, Roxie did not speak Spanish, and the assumption that they were eager to see "white ladies," might just be conjecture. White Americans were not a novelty to Mexicans in Tuxpan by the late 1860s, particular since the city had been occupied during the Mexican-American War. However, white US American women were likely less common, even with the recent influx of Confederate families. Without more details, it is difficult to say how gender dynamics influenced her introduction to Mexico. Roxie displayed evident amusement at being ogled by those with whom she contrasts her own whiteness. Since she had a clear distaste for blacks in the United States, it is unlikely that she would have felt the same way about being stared at by non-whites in the US. This would be particularly so if, as one might suspect, there were significant numbers of men in the crowd that she mentioned. The international setting changed the way that she viewed her whiteness in opposition to non-whiteness and the acceptable relationship between the two.

[70] Roxie Alexander to Mollie Williams, June 5, 1869, Williams Border Papers.

Roxie's method of contrasting her own whiteness with the apparently non-whiteness of Mexicans shows how the centrality of whiteness to Southerners did not end at the crossing of the Mexican border. While Roxie was eager to make this contrast, many Southerners were also careful not to portray all Mexicans as uncivilized non-whites. When Theodocius Joshua Scurlock's brother Dan compared Mexicans to Africans, Theodocius responded that "the White class here rank with the whites of any country."[71] Theodocius was familiar with the Indians of Mexico, filling his journal with stereotypical portraits of lazy, ignorant men and women too "cheap" to pay for a doctor, yet in his letters to Dan he was eager to extend whiteness to a select portion of the Mexican population. This was a common tactic for Confederates who wanted to tempt their fellow compatriots to join them in Mexico. Rather than describe all Mexicans as lacking civilization, Confederates were careful to describe the non-white laboring class—against whom they constructed their own whiteness—in contrast to the white "Spanish" Mexicans with financial means, who provided the settlers with refined company.

OPINIONS OF MEXICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

When Laura, Mollie and Roxie Alexander wrote to friends in Texas, they unceasingly tried to convince them to move to Mexico. When the sisters' father wrote to friends in Texas, they insisted that he add tantalizing information about the excellence of Mexico so that their friends' families might come. The Alexanders were clearly invested in convincing other Texans to move to Mexico. They were not the only ones, either, as many of the Confederate settlers wrote letters back to Texas in an effort to tempt others to

[71] Theodocius Scurlock to Dan Scurlock, n.d., Scurlock Papers.

Mexico. They recognized that they were fighting an uphill battle with popular opinion in the United States, where "tropical" countries tended to have a reputation as cesspools of disease and revolution. Mexicans themselves were often seen as dangerous, uncultured brutes. The majority of the Tuxpan settlers came from Texas and were accordingly in dialogue with Texan racial ideas and perceptions of Mexicans.

Theodocius and Dan Scurlock's letters back and forth to each other while Theodocius was traveling in Veracruz are an excellent example of this. When Dan heard that Theodocius was in Mexico his pleas for Theodocius's return were based not only on his desire for the brothers to live near each other and belief that good Southern men belong in the South, but also his perspective of Mexico. He asked Theodocius, "If everything there was pleasant and congenial why did *Genl* [Sterling] *Price* and the other exiles with him return to the U.S.?"[72] While Dan had never been to Mexico, he was quite insistent that he knew all about the country, and described it in highly racialized terms. "In Mexico they mix with negro and Indian," he told his brother, "a great portion of the Mexicans are as *black* as the negros of the U.S. and as treacherous as the *devil* himself; no man traveling knows when he is safe or what time he may be killed."[73] He added "You should be as easily satisfied in any province in *Africa*. Your social intercourse would be just about the same there as in Mexico; I have an utter contempt for Mexico and the South American states... No American or no man from here I do not think can be happy or even quiet or satisfied. And if you are one of these why do you not come

[72] Dan Scurlock to Theodocius Scurlock, October 19, 1869, Scurlock Papers.
[73] Dan Scurlock to Theodocius Scurlock, October 19, 1869, Scurlock Papers.

back."[74] In his response, Theodocius adamantly rejected the comparison between Africans and Mexicans and maintained that there was respectably refined society in Mexico.

Many white US Americans in Texas during the nineteenth century would have likely agreed with Dan Scurlock's assessment of Mexicans. According to historian Arnoldo de León, in nineteenth century Texas, Mexicans occupied a definitively non-white position in the racial perspective of white Texans. Many derided Mexicans as lazy, ignorant, unclean and received plethora of other insults. They were, however, generally perceived as a step "above" African Americans, a comparison that many of the Confederate settlers at Tuxpan also made.[75] For the rest of the country, where there were fewer interactions with Mexicans, the experiences of the US soldiers who fought in the Mexican-American War had heavily shaped popular opinions of Mexicans. John Henry Brown, in *The Emigrant's Friend*, pointed out that soldiers in the war hardly had access to refined society in Mexico, and therefore would not know anything about it insisted that "the truth is, the females of no country in modern times have been more unjustly misrepresented than those of Mexico… There is in Mexico as refined, as elegant, and as chaste a female society as in any country in the old world or the new."[76]

Many Southerners also perceived Mexico itself through a highly racialized lens. As a country of the tropics, some perceived Mexico as a place inaccessible to whites.

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[74] Dan Scurlock to Theodocius Scurlock, October 19, 1869, Scurlock Papers.
[75] Arnoldo De Leon, *They Called Them Greaser: Anglo Attitudes Toward Mexicans In Texas, 1821-1900*, (University of Texas Press, 1983).
[76] Brown, *Two Years in Mexico*, 80.

According to Gideon Lincecum, "The opinion that prevails in Texas that a white man can't work here, is a foolish lie, invented by, and is only popular with, the lazy and inefficient."[77] Lincecum repeatedly pointed to the work he did and the health he experienced—even well into his seventies—as evidence to disprove the lie that whites could not do well in Mexico. Theodocius Scurlock was also eager to disprove this notion saying that "If the right kind of people were to settle in this country they certainly would amass wealth. Nature has lavished her kindness on this country."[78] He had also said that "Any industrious man can do well in this country."[79] It is fairly safe to say that when Scurlock says "the right kind of people," he likely means white people. The irony in this is that, as he wrote it, Scurlock was completely broke.

The opinion in Texas about Mexico, however, was not unanimous. Quite a few of the settlers at Tuxpan received letters from friends and family back in the United States who mention how much they should like to be in Mexico, away from Yankee and Negro rule. In fact, in response to Mary Brown's assumption that many people in the US had a negative idea of Mexico, a correspondent of hers replied "I think you are a little mistaken abot [sic] a greate [sic] many speaking against Mexico it is true there is some [sic] that dont [sic] like that cuntry [sic] very much." He went on to say that many people used to object to the government of Mexico, at the time headed by Benito Juárez, but by 1869, they found Mexico decidedly preferable to the "Yankee" government, and many "would go there if they could possibly do so, but times are too hard and it is feared they will yet

[77] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Doran, June 22, 1869, Lincecum Collection.
[78] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Doran, January 21, 1868, Lincecum Collection.
[79] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Doran, January 12, 1868, Lincecum Collection.

be harder as the government has no murcy [sic] on the south."[80] Many letters from the US South to Tuxpan, particularly to the Brown family, echo the sentiment that even after the large rush of Confederates to Mexico was over, many people were strongly interested in leaving the South. Accordingly, the settlers in Tuxpan were highly invested in portraying Mexicans in a positive light.

Since the US South was such a race-conscious society, the racialized terms they used to describe Mexicans were critical to their goals. The terms that they used, however unfitting to the actual self-identification of the people they met in Mexico, carried significant weight in their private and public writings to the United States. "Mexican," "Indian," and "Spaniard," often indicated the type (or lack) of labor that people did, their socio-economic position, their race, and whether or not they were appropriate for the "refined society" of Southerners. It was their way of making sense of a new racialized socio-economic structure.

MEXICANS AS LABORERS

"Indians" tended to be the neatest category for many of the settlers. John Henry Brown says that, while "whites and Mestezoes [sic]…live exclusively in towns, the Indians cultivate the farms and appear about as their class elsewhere excepting that they are a sober, quiet and peaceable people."[81] Gideon Lincecum also defined Indians as those that live in the interior of Mexico, and described them as clean and hardworking, yet he also commented that "they all speak Spanish," which means that, to some extent at

[80] S. Jordan to Mary Brown, May 19, 1869, JHB Papers.
[81] John Henry Brown, "Confederates in Mexico," 9 of 22, *Dallas Weekly Herald*, April 25, 1879.

least, the "Indians" that they met at Sunday markets in Tuxpan had adapted to Mestizo society.[82] But no matter how many positive attributes people such as Brown and Lincecum wanted to apply to the "Indians" of Mexico, they were not seen as neighbors with whom they wanted an intimate acquaintance, but rather an important source of labor.

While "Indian" often indicated a laborer, not all laborers were explicitly "Indian," and hired workers were occasionally described as "Mexican" as well. For example, on a trip to get tar for his boat, Gideon Lincecum brought "2 Mexicans, one hired the other a volunteer."[83] While Mexican does not immediately seem to indicate "non-white," the consistency with which labor is racialized in the minds of Southerners suggests that Lincecum did not view the people he brought on his trip as sufficiently white. Lincecum was likely using "Mexican" here to roughly approximate "mestizo," since he did occasionally hire "Indians" for different chores. However, not all the Southerners used the label "Mexican" in the same comparatively clear-cut manner.

The non-white laborers that could be hired in Mexico drew frequent comparisons to Blacks—enslaved and free—in the United States, and Southerners often portrayed Mexican laborers as significantly favorable to US blacks. John Henry Brown wrote, "one average native here [is] worth about as much as two average Black men in the States," in regards to their usefulness and effectiveness as hired labor.[84] The female settlers often made similar comparisons for domestic laborers, where they once again portrayed

[82] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, June 22, 1869, Lincecum Collection.
[83] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, June 16, 1870, Lincecum Collection.
[84] Brown, *Two Years in Mexico,* 86.

Mexicans as far preferable to Blacks. Laura Alexander Vincent, in her unending mission to convince her friends Mollie and Annie Williams to move to Mexico, wrote to Mollie "servants are very cheap most any one can have a servant you don't have to put up with any old sloven of a servant here you can have just the best quality of servants." Even better, she added, "the common Mexican does not try to equalize themselves with white people like the hateful black negro, then they are not quite black they are the color of an Indian some a little darker."[85] The habit of drawing this comparison between Mexicans and blacks was not unique to the Southerners in Mexico. George L. Robertson, a Texan who remained in the United States after the war, wrote to his sister that Mexicans should universally "be peoned, rich and poor, they would make the best plantation hands in the world. They fear and respect authority and are a great deal moore [sic] humble and less intelligent than our negroes." Notably, unlike the Confederate settlers at Tuxpan, Robertson also considered Mexicans to be the lowest "of all the contemptable, despecable people on Earth [sic]."[86] Being despicable clearly did not make for bad field hands as far as Robertson was concerned, but not many Southerners in the United States saw Mexicans as ideal laborers. They mostly thought them too lazy, thus explaining the immigrants' ceaseless quest to convince Southerners otherwise.

Domestic labor was immensely important, particularly to women who were accustomed to having slave or hired black women to help in the house. Gideon Lincecum believed that his daughter Maggie would not do well in Mexico as "there are no negroes

[85] Laura Alexander Vincent to Mollie Williams, September 25, 1870, Williams Border Papers.
[86] George Lee Robertson, March 26, 1864, George Lee Robertson Papers, 1839-1869, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

here, and all the women in the country have to wash and cook and do the house work themselves. It goes so hard with some of them that they howl to go back to the negroes. I am pretty certain that Maggie would not be satisfied or contented with the work women has [sic] to do to get along."[87] The problem of finding domestic labor seems to have been as much of a concern for women as field labor was for men. Mary Brown told her sister,

> We find it somewhat difficult to obtain servants that are willing to be trained to our customs of cooking & housekeeping. The Americans give higher wages than they are accustomed to so as soon as they have furnished themselves with a few changes of raiment and a little money they are rich enough and want to go visiting for a few weeks or months. I kept one for 5 months, then without ceremony, she left me to go to a neighboring town visiting promising to come back. A month has passed and no Maria has presented herself. I suppose I have the alternative of training another or doing without and at a bad time too, as two vessels have [arrived] at Tuxpan from Galveston and I shall have a good deal of company.[88]

Mary's complaint about the Mexican women that she hired for domestic labor echoes common complaints in the United States by white southerners who desperately wanted their former slaves to be a stable work force. Like Mary, former slave owners in the United States often seemed personally affronted by the fact that their laborers had the audacity to leave their employ, and at the most inconvenient time.[89]

Yet, Mary's complaint about her "Maria," and Mexican domestic laborers in general, is sharply contrasted with her portrayal of Francisca in *From Orizava to Tuspan*, which Mary wrote with the intent of publishing it.[90] Francisca was the family's servant during their stay in Orizaba, and when they briefly and incidentally met on the road to

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[87] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, September 27, 1869, Lincecum Collection.
[88] Mary M. Brown to "My dear sisters," August 18, 1868, JHB Papers.
[89] Matthew Pratt Guterl, *American Mediterranean: Southern Slave Holders in the Age of Emancipation*, (Harvard University Press, 2008).
[90] As far as I know, it was never published, though two drafts of the work are in the John Henry Brown Family Papers.

Tuxpan, Mary said Francisca's "benedictions [were] kept up until her voice died away in the distance. Faithful Francisca! A true example of filial duty; a controling [sic] sentiment in the breast of every Mexican."[91] Clearly, then, both her complaint about Maria and her laudation of Francisca has to be taken within the context in which she was writing: one a frustrated letter to a sister about her current situation, and the other a public (and accordingly, politicized) description of Mexicans in general. Likewise, Laura Alexander Vincent's insistence that Mexican servants were undeniably wonderful should be questioned. Labor was a critical issue at this time and for those interested in hiring, the availability of labor held the motivation of getting people to move to where the labor was. Laura's statements have to be taken within the context of her goals: to convince Annie and Mollie to move to Mexico. She even asked Mollie what Annie paid the nurse for her child before bragging how cheap, efficient, dependable and clean her two servant girls were.[92] "If you only knew," she wrote to them, "how peaceful and quiet we can all live out here I do think that you would not stay back there any longer." [93]

It is interesting to point out that Theodocius Scurlock's diary does not fit this pattern in some essential ways. While he does divide the Mexican population between the workers and respectable society along suggestively racial lines, he does not seem to have any stake in convincing anyone that Indian Mexicans are good laborers. Scurlock's diary and letters between his brother largely come from different periods in his life, which make it difficult to say how much of the letters come from a change in perspective, or are

[91] Mary M. Brown, *From Orizava to Tuspan*, 17, JHB Papers.
[92] Laura Alexander Vincent to Mollie Williams, March 15, 1871, Williams Border Collection.
[93] Laura Alexander Vincent to Mollie Williams and Annie Williams Border, September 25, 1870 Williams Border Collection.

just a front for his brother. Yet, he explicitly tells Dan not to move to Mexico, and during the period in which Theodocius was writing in his diary, he was in no position to be hiring any laborers, besides the occasional cook—which he seemed to think that a single man could not live with out. "We are in a bad condition," he wrote during an argument with a fellow US American at whose house he had previously eaten, "No person to cook for us."[94]

Much of his frustrations with his extremely impoverished situation in Mexico seem to be directed at its indigenous population. As the doctor traveled from town to town in near desperation for paying patients, he wrote, "These damned Indians will die before they will send for a Dr." When he was trying to build his house and could not find nails he complained that the Indians were "too stingy to buy nails." Thus, it is likely with no little amount of bitterness that he wrote, "They are truly a lazy people. They farm with the machete which is no farming at all… They are too lazy to farm with the plough… These people are about 150 years behind the times. They all look indolent."[95] This despite the fact that slash-and-burn agriculture is suited to farming in Veracruz, and that Scurlock himself knew far too well that it was not for the lazy. A few weeks later, in increasingly worse financial troubles, he added "This is a great country, Ironically speaking…A man that will undertake to farm here on their system will soon find himself

[94] Scurlock Diary, May 25, 1868, Scurlock Collection.
[95] Scurlock Diary, October 2, 1868, Scurlock Collection.

afoot and naked…Nothing but R[ail] Roads will bring them to a knowledge of the truth."[96]

Occasionally, Scurlock and his traveling partner managed to scrape together enough money to hire a cook, which was evidently not always as beneficial as he would have liked. "Our cook keeps dead drunk when she can get aguardiente," he wrote in his journal, "We will discharge the old sot."[97] He wrote to his brother "If a man has a family his wife can watch the cook but they will take the advantage of a single man." His openness with his brother about the perceived negative aspects of a Mexican cook suggests that he really believes it, and is not too concerned about what his brother might think of it, though he adds in typical US immigrant fashion, "you can hire cheap[:] two and a half and three dollars per month for a good cook."[98]

While the majority of the farming settlers in Tuxpan were concerned primarily with hiring male laborers and female domestic workers, they therefore primarily described working Mexicans along these gender lines. Scurlock, on the other hand, is less interested in labor and hiring. In fact, the gendered way that he described the laboring majority of Mexicans has more in common with many Mexican-American War soldiers than with his fellow immigrants. Similarly to many of the soldiers, Scurlock viewed the "lazy" men in opposition to hard-working women. "The men of this town are passionately fond of ball playing," wrote Scurlock with evident disgust. This he contrasted with the women, who "are more intelligent than the men & also more

[96] Scurlock Diary, November 26, 1868, Scurlock Collection.
[97] Scurlock Diary, June 15, 1868, Scurlock Colletion.
[98] Theodocius Scurlock to Dan Scurlock, January 18, 1871, Scurlock Collection.

accommodating. They are all of a dark color, mixed I suppose with Indian - in fact they are Indians."[99]

Scurlock, writing in a private forum, uninterested in hiring labor, and frustrated with his inability to make money off Mexico's Indian population is also the Southerner most likely to rely on negative stereotypes about Indians. His letters to his brother, in contrast, are as equally eager to portray Mexicans in a generous light as other settlers tended to do. The contrast shows how the settlement project shaped the way that the settlers racialized Mexicans.

MEXICANS AS NEIGHBORS

Since they were settling long term in a region with few US American neighbors, the Southern settlers were also concerned about the local society. Not only did they emphasize that there was a ready source of docile, respectful labor in Mexico, but also that Mexicans are kind and welcoming neighbors. "We remain still quite popular with the natives," Gideon Lincecum wrote to his daughter, "Who are ready to oblige us with anything they have. They frequently send us little messes of their superior cooking."[100] This is a very consistent theme: the abundant hospitality of Mexicans, who were overjoyed to have US Americans as neighbors. Of course, very few of them ever question whether people in Mexico really were overjoyed to have US neighbors, if they were simply polite neighbors, or if they saw a benefit to having the settlers think they were happy with their new neighbors. One rare indication that any of the settlers questioned

[99] Scurlock Diary, January 27, 1869, Scurlock Collection.
[100] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, May 12, 1870, Lincecum Collection.

the motives of Mexican behavior comes from Mary Brown. While on the road between Orizaba and Tuxpan, the party of Southerners stopped at a small house on the side of the road for the night.

> The only occupant was a Mexican man, and the only visible objects save the bare walls were a species of palm nuts, which were spread over the floors of the two rooms evidently in different stages of preparation for market. With true Mexican hospitality he swept these into corners and, *placing all he possessed at* our disposal, disappeared, perhaps to invoke in some rural relicario, the protection of his patron saint from his mysterious visitors" (19).

Mary does not seem to question this clear tension between the declaration of Mexican hospitality and her possibly unfounded belief in the man's fear of his "mysterious visitors." It is not even clear that she sees it as a tension, but she does at least understand that there is more at work to the hospitality of Mexicans than just unabated joy that there are white people in Mexico. Mary's husband, John Henry Brown, also suggests that some Mexicans, at least, had quite a financial stake in being welcoming to US Southerners. After having returned to the United States, John told of a Mexican organ-grinder in San Luis Potosí who often came to the part of town where the confederates were staying, and played Southern songs such as *Dixie* and *Bonnie Blue Flag*. According to John, the man made up to twenty dollars just by playing a few songs for the Southerners, before leaving, "showering blessings upon los confederados."[101]

Yet a proper neighbor—one with whom the settlers had reciprocal, intimate relationships—was often described as a "Spaniard." If "Indian" was loaded with the assumptions of laborer, Spaniard came with the assumption of wealth, education and

[101] Brown, John Henry. "Confederates in Mexico," 3 of 22, *The Dallas Weekly Herald,* March 14, 1879.

whiteness. But, like the line between Mexican and Indian, the line between Spaniard and Mexican appears very blurry, and implies much more than an origin. According to Historian Adrian Burgos, using the term "Spaniard" to carry racial significance was not unique to the Confederate settlers. He argues that throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many non-white baseball players and teams in the United States were able to use the label "Spaniard" to manipulate the race line in baseball. Similarly, many of the Confederates pointedly describe their neighbors along clear lines of Spaniard and Mexican. While these may or may not have conformed to racial and socio-economic divisions in Mexico, the importance that many of the Confederates placed on describing these differences is striking. Since the settlers were so eager emphasize that they were living amongst civilized society, "Spaniard" often carried the weight and significance of "white enough."

The Alexander sisters in particular seem very much invested in the line between Mexican and Spaniard. When talking about society in Mexico, Roxie seems to draw a line between what the Mexicans do—an implicit "they"—and what "we" do with the Spaniards. For example, during the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, Roxie wrote,

> Today the grand feast begins it will last two or three weeks yesterday we saw hundreds of Mexicans going to town to attend the feasta [sic], they came from the interior in every direction they have pack mules with good provisions of fruit and poultry of every description to sell on the plaza and every male that they get they spend at the gambling saloon after their money is spent they go to mass and then

> to a dancing yard and dance all night then they lie around either asleep or drunk until noon they then march around in crowds men wimen [sic] and children.[102]

This is very clearly something that "they" do, and it does not even seem within the bounds of possibility that she would join in. The fact that they were coming from the interior to sell wares during the fiesta suggests that John Henry Brown and Gideon Lincecum would categorize the people that Roxie describes here as Indian. Roxie's description of the Feast of St. Nicholas is similarly indicative of a critically important line between something that "they" do and things that are accessible to her. She wrote to Mollie and Annie that, "The Mexicans have commenced their feasts and fandangoes [sic] already. The Spaniards have very nice parties in Town though I have not attended nor do I intend dancing in Mexico."[103] Unlike Roxie, her sister Mollie often did go to the parties of "Spaniards" in Tuxpan. The contrast between the exoticized "feasts and fandangoes" of the Mexicans and the Spaniards' "very nice parties," is striking. The difference emphasizes the fact that the "very nice parties" were accessible to the Alexander sisters and at least one of them—Mollie—chose to use that access.

Furthermore, Roxie's refusal to dance in Mexico was not uncommon and seemed to have little to do with her sentiments towards Spaniards. Gideon Lincecum enjoyed mocking those who went to parties and danced in Mexico, once telling Sarah "Many of the Americans we have here, were professors of religion before they came. They all dance and gamble now."[104] Even though Roxie opted out of dancing at the "Spanish" parties, they clearly found Spaniards to be an accessible and acceptable society. If

[102] Roxie Alexander to Mollie and Annie Williams, August 15, 1869, Williams Border Collection.
[103] Roxie Alexander to Mollie Williams, December 3, 1869, Williams Border Collection.
[104] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, June 22, 1869, Lincecum Collection.

anything, her hesistancy contrasted with others' willingness to dance in Mexico shows how the whiteness that the settlers constructed for the "Spanish" Mexicans was still something of an exoticized one. The foreign context changed the strict bounds of propriety that the settlers were used to in the United States. Dancing in Texas may not have been entirely appropriate, but in Mexico, in a new and exotic setting with new and exotic—yet sufficiently white—people, the settlers were able to change their notions of acceptable interactions.

Theodocius Scurlock and his traveling companions also attended parties while they were in Mexico. While Scurlock was less likely to explicitly categorize the people with whom he associated as Spanish in his diary, he certainly portrayed them very differently from the Indians whom he described. While he emphasized the laziness and poverty of Indians, he emphasized the respectability, wealth and intelligence of those he met at parties. One night he wrote in his diary, "Had a party tonight. The hall was crowded with the fashionable of the town. Enjoyed ourselves very well by looking on. The dances were fashionable, the ladies neatly dressed and beautiful. The men were very courteous."[105] Another night he described, "The Mexican ladies and gentlemen are very clever and agreeable," and a few days later when these ladies and gentlemen, invited Scurlock's traveling party to a *fandango*, nearly all of them gladly accepted.[106] It's likely that when Scurlock described the fashionable Mexican ladies and gentlemen, they were those that he meant when he told Dan that "the White class here rank with the whites of

[105] Scurlock Diary, October 20, 1867, Scurlock Collection.
[106] Scurlock Diary, January 8, 1868, Scurlock Collection.

any country."[107] And given his description of the parties and those who attended, they might even be the same fashionable ladies and gentlemen that so many of the other migrants describe as "Spanish."

Clara Brown, John Henry Brown's oldest daughter, certainly found Spanish parties accessible and enjoyable. She described in a letter to her Aunt Hannah a party they attended during the Feast of San Isidro at the hacienda of a "Spaniard," Don Pedro.

> "Don Pedro" claimed me a[s] his partner [for] the set, his brother who is quite a handsome young caballero claimed sister Lizzie. When they were all [paired] to their fancy the dance began. The Spanish gentlemen took American "Señoritas" as partners and the American gentlemen Spanish "Señoritas." I think it was really the prettiest and most graceful dance I ever saw…It was very pleasant to dance and chat with those handsome blackeyed "Caballeros," so graceful and polite.[108]

To both Clara Brown and Roxie Alexander, this division between the parties of Mexicans and the parties of Spaniards were both clear-cut and seemingly natural. Spanish parties were also a good place to find Spanish beaus. Mollie Alexander wrote that at a recent fiesta she had "caught a fancy spanish [sic] beau who treated me to cake and everything nice and talked so much to me told me he liked American company and wanted to learn the language."[109] According to Roxie, a good amount of their time was "spent very pleasantly entertaining our Spanish Beaus and occasionally returning their *Sisters visits* and sometimes we all go sailing."[110]

Importantly, none of the women ever wrote to friends or family in the United States about Mexican beaus. While none explicitly articulated that "Spaniard" equated

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[107] Theodocius Scurlock to Dan Scurlock, n.d., Scurlock Collection.
[108] Clara Brown to Hannah, May 16, 1868, JHB Papers.
[109] Mollie Alexander to Mollie Williams, June 5, 1871, Williams Border Collection.
[110] Roxie Alexander to Mollie Williams, September 25, 1870, Williams Border Collection.

"white" and "Mexican" equated "non-white," there is a clear division between what they viewed as acceptable relationships with Spaniards and with Mexicans. And yet, there is still a sense of the exotic when Clara describes the "handsome blackeyed caballeros" or when Mollie discusses her "fancy spanish beau." Even Roxie, who had rejected the idea of dancing in Mexico, evidently entertained spanish beaus. If Clara, Mollie and Roxie's relationships with "Spaniards" were made more permissible by the perceived exoticness of Mexico, they certainly would not have been alone. Latin American has a history of facilitating white US Americans getting in touch with their sexuality. Their emphasis on the Spanishness, and thus the whiteness, of their beaus helped to establish a perimeter of acceptability to their relationships.

Spaniards were also considered eligible for Southerners to marry in a way that Mexicans were evidently not. After years of silence between the families, Mollie Alexander sent Annie Williams Border an update of how all the members of the family were doing. Tellingly, she told Annie "Brother Julius was married to a Spanish girl, Miss Lucina Pancardo he has 4 children 2 girls and 2 boys. Bud is living with a Mexican woman he has 3 children all girls."[111] That one brother was married to a Spanish girl, whom she names, and another brother was living with a Mexican woman, whom Mollie does not name, is a common practice in the letters from Tuxpan—Spaniards are named, Mexicans are just "Mexicans." Furthermore, Mollie's comment suggests how, in the minds of these Southerners at least, these terms are highly classed. John Henry Brown

[111] Mollie Alexander Collins to Annie Williams Border, December 22, 1884, Williams Border Collection.

also seemed to be quite preoccupied with the marriage practices of Mexicans, and suggested that other Southerners would be concerned as well. He wrote in his book

> There is, truly, a lamentable feature in the status of the poor common people of Mexico, and it would be uncandid not to refer to it. It is the absence, in numberless cases, of the marriage vow. But on the other hand, parties unite voluntarily as man and wife, and so live through life, with as much apparent affection and fidelity as when lawfully married. The reason assigned for this is, that the marriage fee is too high for very poor people to pay it, and has long been so.[112]

He even thought that people in the US South would be so concerned about the lack of marriage among Mexicans that he repeatedly emphasized that unmarried couples behaved as faithfully and lovingly as if they were married, and that the Mexican government trying to fix the problem. Within this context, then, we can see how Mollie's statement about her brothers carried as much indication of class as it did race. Bud's "Mexican woman" likely lacked an elite, wealthy family dedicated to ensuring she was properly married before living with a man and bearing children by him. Mollie not only names Julius' wife, but also refers to her as "Miss" when calling her by her maiden name. It seems likely that Lucina, a "Spaniard," was not only white enough for Mollie to approve of her, but wealthy enough to ensure that she was properly married.

Roxie Alexander was intent on getting Mollie and Annie Williams's brother married to a Spanish girl. "Tell your brother," Roxie wrote, "If he wants to *mary* [sic] for money regardless of the *color* or the *habits* of his *lady love* that all he will have to do is to come down to Tuxpan say he is an American and wants to marry."[113] Evidently she even

[112] Brown, *Two Years in Mexico,* 79.
[113] Roxie Alexander to Mollie Williams, December 3, 1869, Williams Border Collection.

had a particular woman in mind, adding a few months later, "Tell your Brother that his Spanish girl is all right she likes his picture very much she says that he is a *Boneeto ombrie* [sic, *bonito hombre*]"[114] These two statements show the problematic and inconsistent way that "Spaniard" was equated with white. While Roxie seems to think that Spanish women were marriageable, she still stigmatized them as being not quite white, and not quite of proper habits.

The Lincecum family seemed to a have fewer qualms about the marriageability and appropriate whiteness of "Spaniards." Attie, one of Gideon's granddaughters became engaged to a man she met in Mexico less than a year after arriving.[115] According to Leonora—Attie's mother and Gideon's daughter—Attie's fiancé Miguel was dedicated to educating himself, diligently learning English and ordering books from Galveston. "When you read his letters Attie has sent to her Aunt Sallie" Leonora wrote to her brother-in-law, "tell me what you think of him," and mentioned that Gideon was "highly pleased with him." Furthermore, she wrote, "there are a great many fine looking Spaniards that come here every Sunday evening. Boat loads come over Miguel says he is jealous, if Attie was not so pretty he would not be jealous.[116] Leonora seems to suggest that she classified Miguel as one of the boatloads of "Spaniards." Not only was Miguel

[114] Roxie Alexander to Mollie Williams, April 20, 1870, Williams Border Collection.

[115] It is uncertain whether the marriage actually took place. It is never mentioned in any of the extant family papers. Mollie Alexander said that Attie [Attilla Campbell] married George Bradford in April of 1871, having become engaged after knowing each other for a mere three days. The marriage itself, however, is not the important thing here, but rather the acceptance of a "Spaniard" as a potential marriage partner. Mollie Alexander to Mollie Williams, June 5, 1871, Williams Border Collection.

[116] Leonora Lincecum Campbell to W.P. Doran, February 5, 1869, Lincecum Collection.

welcomed into the family, but it seems that both Leonora and Miguel considered any of the "Spaniards" competition in the marriage department.

Gideon's own description of Miguel points out in more striking terms what he considers to be the key aspects of Miguel's acceptability as a marriage partner for Attie. After explaining to Sarah how "Miguel" is pronounced, he told her that "He is a sober, industrious well educated good looking and very polite gentleman, belonging to a very influential wealthy family of long standing…Still more, they are white folks.[117] While Gideon never describes Miguel as a "Spaniard," as Leonora suggests, nor does he call him a "Mexican." What he does emphasize, however, is his whiteness, wealth, respectability, and education. These are often key aspects that US writers emphasized when they are trying to portray the population of Mexico in a positive light. Theodocius Scurlock emphasized similar attributes when describing Mexicans whom he finds respectable. For example, when staying with a US American he said, "he has a Mexican wife. She is a very intelligent woman." For Scurlock, intelligent and respectable were terms that he reserved for people whom he considered belonging to an acceptable society.

When it came to establishing that their own behavior and relationships were acceptable, the settlers could not rely on the fact that their readers would be sympathetic to their generous portrayal of Mexicans. Accordingly, they had to clarify the whiteness of their neighbors, beaus and fiancés by establishing them as intelligent and "Spanish."

[117] Gideon Lincecum to Sarah Lincecum Doran, April 29, 1869, Lincecum Collection.

Conclusion

In 1887, the US Consul at Tuxpan, John Drayton, wrote to his superior in Washington DC to warn that the US citizens in Tuxpan were not well enough protected. The reason he brought this to the attention of his superiors was due to the recent murder of a US citizen by his Mexican neighbor. The accused murderer was never brought to justice because, as the US Americans claimed, he had too many ties to the local political system; even the police were afraid of him. The US citizen in this case, oddly enough, was T.J. Scurlock. The same T.J. Scurlock who insisted on adding the phrase "so called" whenever referring to the United States, until he grew worried that the "Vandals" were spying on him. Evidently, Scurlock had gotten into a fight with his neighbor over the neighbor's flock of geese leaving a mess in front of Scurlock's house. The neighbor then shot him. Despite the fact that Scurlock completely rejected the US government, and was rooting for yet another rebel uprising from the South, the consular report mentioned him as nothing other than a US citizen. One of many US citizens in Tuxpan by the late 1880s, and in the eyes of the Consul, no different from the rest of them.[118]

This illustrates how difficult it is, by the end of the 1880s, to pick out Southerners from the rest of US citizens. In fact, a map from the US colony at Tuxpan, clearly back-dated to 1865, but created much later, has a family on it that fought for the Union—Robert Woollett moved with his family from Minnesota to Tuxpan around 1894, after having fought for the North in the 1860s. Not only did this Northerner manage to settle in

[118] John Drayton, Despatches from the US Consul at Tuxpan, 1879-1906, (Washington: National Archives, 1964).

the middle of the Southern settlement in Tuxpan, but one of his daughters, Lyda Woollett, married the very first child born to the US settlement, Mordelo Lee Vincent.[119] The marriage did not last long but it is indicative of shifting identifications among the Tuxpan settlers. Once, living beside Yankees was almost as bad as living beside Blacks, yet the second generation of settlers married into Yankee families in Mexico.

Even John Henry Brown's history of the US settlement in Tuxpan, which he wrote in the 1880s, has a more inclusive vision of US identity. While his 1867 book emphasized his continuing loyalty to the South and the Confederacy, and his hatred of the Yankee imperialists, the 1880s articles display a sense of brotherhood with Northerners. He tells a story about when he was in Yucatan, and discovered a Northerner who was wanted by the Mexican governor. He supposedly gave the man and the family a stirring speech about national brotherhood, and helped smuggle the man out of Merida. Whether or not the story is true, and the speech at the very least has a trumped-up tone to it, it is important that by the 1880s, Brown had shifted his Southern identity to one no longer based on hating Northerners.

John Henry Brown was back in the United States by the time he wrote the *Confederates in Tuxpan* series of articles, but that does not mean that his ideas were somehow limited to the United States. The border was fairly fluid at this point, and at the same time that families such as the Woolletts were moving the Tuxpan, many Confederate families went back to the United States, either for visits or to make sure that their children received English-language education. In 1884, Colonel Otis Messick wrote

[119] Personal communication with Margaret Wasserman, February 26, 2011

from Tuxpan to Tinie McKnight, the widow of David McKnight, who remained in Matamoros. Messick's wife was traveling with one of McKnight's daughters to visit family in Texas. And Gideon Lincecum died in Texas, rather than his much loved home in Mexico because, during a trip to visit his family in Texas, he became too ill to travel, and died in Texas. If Leonora and her children continued living in Tuxpan, as they seemed quite determined to do, any possible letters they may have sent back to Texas are missing from the family papers. And despite Scurlock's constant efforts with the ladies of Mexico, he died with no family. After Scurlock's death the Tuxpan Consulate gathered information from a few US Americans, including F.B. Boyd, who was very likely the son of Dr. Boyd, Scurlock's close friend in Tuxpan.

One of the strongest shows of a continuing presence in Mexico past the 1870s comes from Georgie Burden. Her memoirs include a detailed family history, beginning with her grandfather, Ferell Vincent, another early settler at Tuxpan. Georgie's son Jack Burden was the third generation of children born to Confederate settlers in the Tuxpan area. But then, there was nothing particularly Southern about the family anymore. In fact, even Roxie Alexander's letters, once filled with the occasional bit of vitriol against Yankees and blacks, lacked any such venom by the 1880s. The end of Reconstruction also ended the threat of "negro rule," probably taking away some of Mexico's appeal for Southerners. While Messick and Lincecum continued to visit the United States on rare occasions, Georgie Burden's family kept even more fluid sense of nationality, and moved back and forth across the border readily. In a fascinating and unexpected situation, Burden attended school in Louisiana, where, after growing up in Mexico, she learned

English for the first time. Her schoolmates taunted her with terms like "spic" and "greaser," even though she considered herself a US American. The national identifications of the succeeding generations were clearly quite complicated, and perhaps Southern and Confederate identity did not disappear from Mexico as entirely as many scholars have suggested.

But, by the 1880s, Southerners seem nearly imperceptible from Northerners in Mexico. A new wave of immigrants began to arrive in Mexico in the 1870s, welcomed by the Porfiriato's modernizing projects. And thus, when Lolla Willis of New Orleans was imprisoned in Tuxpan in 1887 for an alleged abortion—the American Consul swore she was innocent and the charges were clearly trumped up—it is unlikely that any Southern identity or disgust for the U.S had compelled her to Mexico. The Confederate settlements in Mexico became the American Colonies, drawn more and more to the railroad and similar industries and less towards agriculture. J.B. Willis' several-month visit to Mexico in 1876 was on the cusp of this change; during his trip through Veracruz and Mexico City, he said nothing about US Americans in Tuxpan, but met a large number of US Americans in Mexico City. Nothing was ever mentioned about any sense of Southern identity.

This thesis is a step towards further exploring Confederate migration to Mexico. Questions remain about the Confederate settlements, and drawing on further sources in both the United States and Mexico could give a clearer sense of the settlers socio-economic background in the United States and a better picture of their successes and failures in Mexico than their own purpose-driven letters can provide. An important path

for future research is the gender roles and dynamics of the Confederate settlements. Like women in frontier settlements, the women in the Tuxpan colony seem to have found themselves with more work to do and less help to get it done than they were used to. They also experienced different standards of propriety in relationships with "handsome caballeros." How did these changes affect gender roles and appropriate forms of expressing sexuality? Another critical question is the extent to which this settlement represents other mid 19th century US American settlements in Mexico and elsewhere. Among such settlements were black US Americans who went to Mexico throughout the mid to late 19th century. Their racial perceptions of Mexicans would be a particularly telling comparison to how ideology, experience and the goals of the settlement project shape racial perceptions abroad.

As the letters of the Confederate settlers show, many of them struggled to achieve financial stability in Mexico. However, as they were largely driven by ideological purposes, analysis of the settlements has to move beyond their immediate successes or failures. For some, such as Theodocius Scurlock, an economic downgrade from his life in the United States was worth his "freedom" from the "Vandal government." For those who stayed in Mexico, their social and economic investment in attracting more Confederates to Mexico strongly shaped the way that they racialized the settlement project. In order to show that Mexico was a desirably civilized place worth moving to, they had to prove that "the White class here rank with the whites of any country."[120]

[120] Theodocius Scurlock to Dan Scurlock, n.d., Scurlock Papers.

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